

Message Text

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FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: DATA ON NEW GOF DEFENSE MINISTER

1. FOLLOWING IS BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON FRENCH DEFENSE MINISTER SOUFFLET REQUESTED BY ADMIRAL COUSINS: "ONE OF FIVE GAULLISTS IN THE NEW FRENCH CABINET FORMED ON 28 MAY 1974, JACQUES SOUFFLET (PRONOUNCED SUEFLAY) HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF DEFENSE. AN EXPERIENCED SENATOR AND BUSINESS-MAN AND A FORMER CAREER MILITARY MAN AND WAR HERO, SOUFFLET APPARENTLY HAS ALL THE NECESSARY CREDENTIALS PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING FEELS ARE REQUIRED TO DEAL WITH FRANCE'S CURRENT SECURITY PROBLEMS. BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT IS THE PRINCIPAL FORMULATOR OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES, HOWEVER, SOUFFLET IS EXPECTED TO BE THE EXECUTOR RATHER THAN THE INNOVATOR OF POLICY.

JACQUES LUCIEN SOUFFLET WAS BORN ON 4 OCTOBER 1912 AT LESBOEUF IN THE SOMME DEPARTMENT. HE IS A GRADUATE OF BOTH THE MILITARY ACADEMY AT ST. CYR AND THE AIR SCHOOL. DETAILS CONCERNING HIS EARLY MILITARY CAREER ARE NOT KNOWN BUT DURING WORLD WAR II, AS A PILOT WITH THE FREE FRENCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORCES, HE LED ONE OF THE WELL-KNOWN SQUADRONS, ;LA GROUPE

LORRAINE." FOR OUTSTANDING WARTIME SERVICE HE HOLDS THE CROIX DE GUERRE, THE RESISTANCE MEDAL, THE US DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS AND HAS BEEN DECORATED AS A COMMANDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR AND A COMPANION OF THE LIBERATION. HE IS ALSO HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE FRIENDS OF THE FREE FRENCH AIR FORCE.

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SOUFFLET LEFT THE AIR FORCE AFTER THE WAR WITH THE RANK OF COLONEL. HE THEN BECAME A TECHNICAL ADVISER WITH THE AIR TRANSPORT COMPANY AND WHEN THE LATTER MERGED WITH AIR ALGERIA TO BECOME THE GENERAL AIR TRANSPORT COMPANY-AIR ALGERIA DURING THE MID-50'S, SOUFFLET WAS MADE GENERAL MANAGER AND ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT. SINCE 1960 SOUFFLET HAS BEEN WITH THE GENERAL COMPANY FOR DEPARTMENTAL TRANSPORT AND HAS BEEN ITS PRESIDENT SINCE 1969. FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS HE HAS ALSO BEEN PRESIDENT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE TRANSPORT COMPANY (SOCIETE DES TRANSPORTS).

DESCRIBED AS AN 'HISTORIC' GAULLIST, SOUFFLET HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE SENATE SINCE 1959. A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE GAULLIST PARTY SENATE GROUP (1965-71), HE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE SENATE VICE-PRESIDENTS SINCE 1971. FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS HE HAS ALSO BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE GAULLIST PARTY COUNCIL FOR THE PARIS REGION.

SOUFFLET HAS BEEN MARRIED TO THE FORMER ODETTE VALLETTE SINCE 1948. THEY HAVE FOUR CHILDREN, INCLUDING ONE FROM MME. SOUFFLET'S PREVIOUS MARRIAGE."

2. POUCHING BIO DATA ON OTHER KEY MEMBERS OF CABINET. KISSINGER

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